steps have been taken to enhance the export growth which include reduction in transaction cost through decentralization, simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. Special Economic Zones are being set up to further boost the exports.

New industrial policy for Northern Hilly States

2449. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal are also as hilly, backward and remote as the States of NE parts of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that for NE States, there is separate industrial policy; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to announce a separate industrial policy to Northern Hilly States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal on the lines of NE States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN) (a) and (b) Considering relative geographical isolation of the North East region, distance from the main centres of trade and industry, inadequate physical infrastructure, smallness of the regional market and low accessibility to the market outside the region as well as prevalent extraordinary circumstances, a Special Package of incentives was notified by the Government on 24.12.1997 to stimulate industrial development in the region.

(c) Proposals have been received from the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarnchal for a separate industrial policy. No proposal from State of Himachal Pradesh for a separate industrial policy has been received.

Smuggling of diamonds

2450. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item